

SITUATION REPORT NO. 2
INCIDENT NO. 2005-033
DATE: April 12, 2005 Time: 5:00 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck ND 58505

1. **NATURE OF DISASTER: Drought/Fire** - Abnormally dry to severe drought conditions exist across much of western North Dakota and will continue through the summer, based on forecasts by the National Weather Service (NWS). These conditions have resulted in numerous fire emergencies and water supply shortages across western North Dakota, particularly along the Missouri River system. The scale and the frequency of wildfires continue to increase.
2. **DEATHS AND INJURIES:** On April 8, three firefighters suffered burns while attempting to contain a 1,200-acre wildfire near Wilton in Burleigh County. One firefighter suffered second and third degree burns to most of his upper body and was airlifted to the St. Paul Ramsey Burn Center in Minnesota. A second firefighter experienced burns, as well as a broken left leg and ankle, and a third firefighter suffered burns.
3. **DAMAGES: WATER SHORTAGES:** On March 18, approximately 1,700 (1,300 city and 400 rural) residents in Garrison and the surrounding area were placed under a boil order by the N.D. Department of Health due to a filtering problem at the city's water treatment plant. Portions of the water intake line have been exposed as water in Lake Sakakawea recedes and ice levels dissipate. The McLean County Emergency Manager and Garrison City Auditor reported that the filtering issue has been fixed, and they are awaiting new controls. Until that time, the boil order will remain in effect. The process is reported to take several weeks. Minot media stations have been notified, as well as the Garrison nursing homes, schools and Garrison hospital. The community access television channel has also been utilized to provide notification to the public.

On April 4, the Barnes County Emergency Manager reported that the Sheyenne River is abnormally low for this time of the year.

FIRES: The State Operations Center (SOC) received approximately 80 fire reports, 75 of which occurred between March 28 and April 10. The fires ranged in size from one acre to more than 1,200 acres. Sources of ignition included sparks from passing trains, controlled burns that grew out of control due to weather conditions, downed power lines, careless handling of flammable materials and electric fencing, as well as sparks from farm equipment. Some fires were ignited from embers that remained from controlled burns of tree stumps and manure piles that had been conducted up to 30 days earlier. The embers were fanned into flames by strong winds. Counties reporting fires included:

County	Number of Fires Reported	Damage Beyond Acreage	Mutual Aid Requested	Number of Fire Dept. Mutual Aid Responders
Barnes	4	One barn 300 hay/corn/straw bales one abandoned farm house	Yes	1
Burleigh	7	Farm shed and equipment One fire truck damaged	Yes	11 1 1
Cass	1	None reported	No	
Dickey	5	One barn	Yes	1
Divide	1	None reported	No	
Emmons	1	None reported	No	
Grant	1	None reported	No	
Griggs	1	None reported	No	
Kidder	2	Power line knocked down	No	
LaMoure	2	Grain bins	No	
Logan	1	None reported	No	
McHenry	8	None reported	Yes	2
McIntosh	7	Cattle feeders	Yes	1
McLean	4	None reported	Yes	2. 1 1
Morton	1	None reported	No	
Mountrail	1	None reported	No	
Pierce	1	None reported	Yes	1
Ransom	4	None reported	No	
Renville	1	None reported	No	
Sargent	2	None reported	Yes	2
Sheridan	3	Utility poles burned	Yes	2 1
Stutsman	20	455 hay and straw bales Fence line 7000 bushels of corn Shelter belt One calf killed by fire	Yes	1 1

County	Number of Fires Reported	Damage Beyond Acreage	Mutual Aid Requested	Number of Fire Dept. Mutual Aid Responders
Wells	1	None reported	No	
Williams	1	None reported	Yes	1

The largest fire during this reporting period occurred on April 8, southwest of the City of Wilton in Burleigh County, when embers from tree stumps that had been burned 30 days earlier were fanned into flames by winds initially reported at 38 miles per hour (mph), with gusts to 45 mph. Initial reports of the fire were received at 3:49 p.m., indicating a wildfire that had consumed 80 acres. The first firefighting units arrived on-scene at 3:57 p.m. Twenty minutes later the fire had doubled in size, and by 5:50 p.m. the fire had become unpredictable, with three firefighters suffering significant burns and injuries. Damages occurred to a fire truck and a metal outbuilding containing a boat and a camper. Approximately 600 acres burned in Burleigh County, plus an additional 600 acres in McLean County before the fire was brought under control around 8:40 p.m.

4. **RESOURCES:**

LOCAL: In addition to the previous report, agencies responding to fires include city and county fire departments, emergency medical, city and county dispatch centers, county law enforcement, electrical companies and city and county emergency management officials.

STATE: No change from the previous report.

FEDERAL: No change from the previous report.

5. **VOLUNTEER ACTION:** The American Red Cross has been providing refreshments to firefighters throughout the state.

Volunteer firefighters, along with area farmers, helped with efforts to extinguish fires and monitor areas where fires may still be smoldering.

6. **MAJOR ACTIONS: WATER SHORTAGES:** On April 4, 2005, an emergency declaration was issued by the Mayor of the City of Garrison for continuing problems with the water intake system due to low water levels in Lake Sakakawea. The loss of water has affected the health, well-being and public safety of the citizens.

FIRES: On April 5, a fire emergency and open burning ban was declared by the McIntosh County Commissioners due to the drought conditions.

The Burleigh and Morton County Commissions issued bans on burning on April 8.

On April 1, 2005, a ban on open burning was declared by the N.D. Game and Fish Department on all N.D. Game and Fish Wildlife Management Areas, primarily on both sides of the Missouri River (Burleigh and Morton Counties), south of Bismarck and Mandan.

In addition to the initial response by the Wilton Rural Fire Department, mutual aid assistance during the April 8 Wilton fire was provided by the Bismarck City Fire Department, Burleigh County Rural Fire Department, Mandan City Fire Department, Morton County Rural Fire Department, Sterling Rural Fire Department, Washburn Fire Department, Underwood Fire Department, Riverdale Fire Department, Turtle Lake Fire Department, and the Mercer Fire Department. Twenty-three fire units, three ambulance units and law enforcement units from the Burleigh County Sheriff's Office, McLean County Sheriff's Office and the N.D. Highway Patrol assisted with fire operations, with notification and communications coordinated by Bismarck/Burleigh Communications Center, Morton County Communications, McLean County Dispatch, and N.D. State Radio Communications Center. Critical incident stress management was provided by the Bismarck Police Department Chaplain and the N.D. State Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team with the Wilton Fire Department. Another briefing will be held for the Bismarck Fire Department, Bismarck Metro Area Ambulance, Bismarck-Burleigh dispatchers, Burleigh County Sheriff's deputies, and Sterling Rural Fire and Bismarck Rural Fire. Staff coordinating and monitoring activities included emergency management personnel for Burleigh, McLean and Morton Counties, as well as the N.D. Division of Emergency Management. The Governor's Office, the Adjutant General and the Fire Marshal also monitored events. The N.D. Forest Service provided technical assistance; its firefighting units were in reserve. The NWS provided updated spot forecasts during the event.

The State Fire Marshal and the N.D. Aeronautics Commission scheduled two training sessions for wildfire suppression training with the local fire chiefs and aerial applicators for April 12. The training will be conducted by a nationally certified Single Engine Air Tanker Pilot trainer. The program will deal with communications and tactics of local fire control problems.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from the previous report.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from the previous report.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director